

House Resolution

No. 50

Introduced by Assembly Member Nation

April 28, 2004

House Resolution No. 50—Relative to skin cancer and melanoma awareness.

1 WHEREAS, Malignant melanoma, a serious skin cancer, is
2 characterized by the uncontrolled growth of pigment-producing
3 tanning cells; and

4 WHEREAS, Melanoma has its beginnings in melanocytes, the
5 skin cells that produce the dark protective pigment called melanin.
6 Melanomas may suddenly appear without warning, but may also
7 begin in or near a mole or other dark spot in the skin; and

8 WHEREAS, Melanoma generally begins as a mottled, light
9 brown to black flat blemish with irregular borders, usually at least
10 one-quarter inch in size. It may turn shades of red, blue, or white,
11 crust on the surface or bleed, and most frequently appears on the
12 upper back torso, lower legs, head, and neck; and

13 WHEREAS, Excessive exposure to ultraviolet radiation (UVA
14 and UVB) is the most important preventable cause of melanoma.
15 Other possible causes include genetic factors and immune
16 deficiencies. Malignant melanoma has also been linked to past
17 sunburns and sun and tanning device exposure at younger ages;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Melanoma can affect men, women, and children,
20 but individuals with increased risk include those with fair
21 complexions, prior significant sunburns, a family member with
22 melanoma, or a high number of atypical moles; and

1 WHEREAS, Atypical moles are unusual moles that are
2 generally larger than normal moles, variable in color, often have
3 irregular borders, and may occur in far greater numbers than
4 regular moles; and

5 WHEREAS, The incidence of melanoma has doubled in the last
6 20 years, and it continues to rise faster than any other cancer in
7 women, except for lung cancer. Melanoma is the most common
8 form of cancer among people between 25 and 29 years of age, and
9 experts estimate that if the present rate continues, soon melanoma
10 will strike one in 70 Californians; and

11 WHEREAS, Six out of seven skin cancer deaths are from
12 malignant melanoma. Advanced malignant melanoma spreads to
13 other organs and may result in death. When detected early, surgical
14 removal of thin melanomas can cure the disease in most cases; and

15 WHEREAS, Early detection is crucial. There is a direct
16 correlation between the thickness of the melanoma and the
17 survival rate. If a melanoma is detected and treated early, the cure
18 rate is very high. Generally, as the disease advances, the tumor
19 thickens and spreads, lowering the survival rate; and

20 WHEREAS, Correct aggressive treatment by qualified medical
21 professionals can lead to positive results; and

22 WHEREAS, Melanoma in its early stages may only be detected
23 by visual inspection. Dermatologists recommend regular
24 self-examination of the skin to detect changes in its appearance,
25 especially changes in existing moles or blemishes. Additionally,
26 patients with risk factors should have a complete skin examination
27 annually; now, therefore, be it

28 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the
29 month of May 2004, shall be recognized as Skin Cancer Awareness
30 Month in California, and all Californians be encouraged to make
31 themselves and their families aware of the risk of skin cancer and
32 the preventive measures; and be it further

33 *Resolved*, That the Assembly hereby proclaims May 3, 2004, as
34 Melanoma Awareness Monday in California to increase public
35 awareness of the importance of routine complete skin examination
36 to detect early melanomas; and be it further

37 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly shall transmit
38 copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

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